



County of Fairfax, Virginia

## **FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PLAN**

(Part of the Northern Virginia Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan)

### **PROGRESS REPORT**



Lake Royal, Fairfax, VA (Fairfax County Photo)

Prepared by:

**STORMWATER PLANNING DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

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# **Floodplain Management Plan Progress Report**

## **I. Introduction**

In an effort to reduce the nation's mounting natural disaster losses, the U.S. Congress passed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000), which amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Act. Section 322 of DMA 2000 emphasizes the need for state and local governments to coordinate closely on mitigation planning activities and makes the development of a hazard mitigation plan a specific eligibility requirement for any local government applying for federal mitigation grant funds. These funds include the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program, both of which are administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The Northern Virginia Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan was developed in accordance with state and federal rules and regulations governing local hazard mitigation plans. The plan was adopted by four counties, including Fairfax, and ten participating municipalities in accordance with the authority and police powers granted to counties and municipalities under sections 15.2-2223 through 15.2-2231 of the Virginia State Code. A list of the participating counties is provided in the Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan, dated December 7, 2011, prepared by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and the engineering firm Dewberry. Under 44 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 201.6(c) (4) (i), the plan maintenance process includes a section describing the method and schedule of monitoring, evaluating and updating the mitigation plan. Under 44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(4)(ii), the plan maintenance process includes a procedure by which local governments incorporate the requirements of the mitigation plan into other planning mechanisms, such as comprehensive or capital improvements plans, when appropriate.

The purpose of the Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan is to:

- Protect life, safety and property by reducing the potential for future damages and economic losses that result from natural hazards;
- Make communities safer places to live, work and play;
- Qualify for grant funding in both the pre-disaster and post-disaster environment;
- Speed recovery and redevelopment following future disaster events;
- Demonstrate a local commitment to hazard mitigation principles;
- Comply with state and federal legislative requirements for local multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans.

Each jurisdiction participating in the Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan is responsible for implementing specific actions as prescribed in their locally adopted mitigation action plan. In each mitigation action plan, every proposed action is assigned to a specific local department or agency for responsibility and accountability. This approach enables individual jurisdictions to update their unique mitigation action plan as needed without altering the broader focus of the regional plan. The separate adoption of locally-specific actions also ensures that each

jurisdiction is not held responsible for monitoring and implementing the actions of other jurisdictions involved in the planning process.

The Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division (SWPD), Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), has prepared this progress report on the implementation of the flood mitigation actions of the Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan in response to FEMA requirements for the maintenance of the county's Community Rating System (CRS) program. The CRS is a program under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) that provides a number of benefits to participating communities. The CRS program requires the county to submit this progress report to FEMA annually.

Hard copies of the progress report are sent to all members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (Board) each year. In addition, this report will be released to the media and made available to the public. A news release inviting the media and the public to review the progress report on the county web site is sent to the county media mailing list. Hard copies of this and earlier progress reports are available to the public and media at county libraries and at the SWPD, Fairfax County Government Center, located at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 449, Fairfax, VA 22035.

A hard copy of this and earlier progress reports may be obtained from the SWPD by calling 703-324-5500, TTY 711, or a request may be made by email at [SWDmail@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:SWDmail@fairfaxcounty.gov), or in person at the Fairfax County Government Center.

The Board adopted the county's portion of the current Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan on May 22, 2012. This report constitutes the assessment of the county's actions required by this plan. Provided below is a brief discussion of the progress made on specific flood mitigation actions proposed by the county as identified in the Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan.

## **II. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 2 (2006):**

**Continue to implement flood proofing methods for some structures based on the outcome of analyzing alternative solutions to flood causes**

### **Project 1: 5617 - 5626 Overly Drive Flood Mitigation Project**

This flood mitigation project provided overland relief by constructing a new channel using natural channel design techniques for a neighborhood prone to frequent flooding.

### **Project 2: 7218 Wickford Drive Flood Mitigation Project**

This project provided flood mitigation control and overland relief. The work included replacing a 60" reinforced concrete pipe and a retaining wall, and installing a larger junction box and yard inlet top, and improving drainage swale capacity with site restoration.

### **Project 3: 6724 Blanche Drive Flood Mitigation Project**

This project addressed mitigation benefits of a prior project. The work improved overland relief via a defined and enlarged swale next to the home.

#### **Project 4: 7627 Luton Place Flood Mitigation Project**

The project provided flood mitigation from a drainage area of approximately 300 acres. The work demolished an existing deck, removed and replaced window wells and an areaway with walls. Overland relief was greatly enhanced by adding capacity to the drainage swale next to the home

#### **Project 5: 7624 and 7626 Luton Place**

The county recently completed structural demolition and site restoration of these two homes. The work completely removed these structures from future risk.

#### **Project 6: Kings Park West Recreation Association demolition and restoration**

This was a community association, Fairfax County Park Authority and SWPD partnership project. The Kings West project demolished a former and defunct recreation site that was a community eyesore and potential liability. The project removed two pools, bath house, tennis courts, and a parking lot. With this impervious surface removed, the site was restored with bio-filtration and native planting practices. The completed work is now the new Rabbit Branch Park and reflects restoration of major floodplain – specifically, an area greater than 400 acres drains through this site.

#### **Project 7: Huntington Levee**

A contract to design a levee system to better protect the Huntington community from flooding has been awarded to an engineering consultant. Design work has commenced on this project. The project is estimated at \$30 million and will take approximately seven years to complete design and construction of the project. Additional information can be accessed through the county website at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/huntingtonlevee/>

It should be noted that as part of planning its capital improvement program, Fairfax County continually examines options to improve detention/retention to enhance and improve downstream drainage conditions. Rather than the property specific mitigation projects, this is a broader planning focus on larger drainage area/shed benefits that can be incorporated into projects.

### **III. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 2 (2010):**

#### **Encourage homeowners to make homes more resilient to wind and flood by additional outreach methods such as websites and brochures**

Annually, the county mails a newsletter (*Flood Protection Information*) to approximately 20,000 county residents who are most at risk for flooding. These residents are in or near a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), the area inundated by the base (one-percent-annual-chance) flood. The

newsletter, which has been published for the last six years including 2013, includes information about flood proofing and property protection measures that residents may take to protect themselves and their property.

The county encourages residents to obtain flood insurance. Fact sheets on flood insurance are readily available at Board offices and distributed at special county events. They are also mailed or sent electronically through e-mail to anyone who requests the information.

In addition, the county provides access to flood information on: what residents can do to protect their property, the **NFIP**, and flood preparedness and flood safety tips. This information can be accessed through the county website.

#### **IV. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 4 (2010):**

##### **Educate the public about the dangers of driving through flooded roadways, maintain depth signs and police presence at high water crossings**

In the county's annual *Flood Protection Information Newsletter* flood safety messages are included that warn residents about the dangers of driving or walking through flooded roadways. Also included was the "Turn Around, Don't Drown" message artwork and links to the FEMA web page.

The county's Office of Public Affairs (OPA) publishes an emergency information blog, among many other public education items, that include safety messages during flooding events.

Residents who sign up for the county's Community Emergency Alert Network may receive emergency alert information by e-mail, cellular or satellite phone, or text messages. Additional flood safety and emergency preparedness tips can be accessed through the county website at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/prepare/floodsafety.htm>

#### **V. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 5 (2006):**

##### **Continue to install remote lake level sensors, data collectors/alarms, stream flow gauges, tide gauges, and rain gauges at critical locations throughout the county to allow for earlier warning of potential flooding. Continue to develop action plans for public education and warning.**

Remote monitoring equipment for rain gage and lake level data was installed at the Fairfax County Park Authority's South Twin Lake early in the fall of 2012. An identical radio telemetry system was installed late in the fall of 2012 for a state-regulated, county-maintained dam, Dulles Station at Dulles Corner. Fairfax County's DPWES, Fire and Rescue Department, Police Department, and the Office of Emergency Management and the Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC) worked together to improve the response to predicted flooding in the Huntington area including joint training, evacuation planning sessions, and a formalized communications protocol specifically for Huntington flooding events. DPSC published this as Training Bulletin TB 13-016 on June 1, 2013



## **VI. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 5 (2010):**

### **Work with dam owners to repair or decommission private dams within the county**

The county has completed the inventory and identified state regulated private dam owners within Fairfax County. An assessment of the resources that should be acquired to undertake this task is ongoing.

## **VII. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 12 (2010): [Activity recommended by Fairfax County Park Authority]**

### **Identify funding opportunities to replace vulnerable or undersized culvert stream crossings with bridges or larger culverts to reduce flood hazards**

The county will continue to assist the owners in identifying vulnerable or undersized culvert stream crossings so that the deficiency can be considered in their replacement to limit the flooding potential of the adjoining community.

## **VIII. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 13 (2010):**

### **Increase flood warning capabilities, particularly as they relate to dam failure**

The county upgraded its data collection software which stores and sends alarms when set thresholds for rainfall or water levels are exceeded. The new system provides basin average rainfall values using gage-adjusted radar; hence, allowing a much more accurate determination of the actual county-wide distribution of rainfall during intense weather events.

Two additional low water crossing warning systems will be added in the fall of 2013. These sites were identified by Fire and Rescue as sites where rescue of motorists from floodwaters have occurred.

## **IX. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 14 (2010):**

### **Establish flood level markers along bridges and other structures to indicate the rise of water levels along creeks and rivers in potential flood prone areas**

The county will initiate this work as resources become available.

## **X. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 15 (2010):**

### **Retrofit Huntsman Lake, a high-hazard state-regulated dam, to adequately pass the Spillway Design Flood**

Four high-hazard, state-regulated dams (Royal Lake, Woodglen Lake, Lake Barton and Huntsman Lake) required retrofits to adequately pass the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) without potential erosion and head-cutting of the auxiliary spillway. The county partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) who originally designed and built these

facilities, to rehabilitate their auxiliary spillways. In May 2009, rehabilitation of the first of these four dams, Royal Lake, was completed. The rehabilitation work for Woodglen Lake was completed in September 2010, and the Lake Barton rehabilitation was completed in June 2011. Hydrologic and hydraulic analysis for the fourth dam, Huntsman Lake, was completed in April 2011, and a rehabilitation plan finalized in September 2011. Final design for the Huntsman Lake rehabilitation, which includes armoring of the auxiliary spillway and replacement of the principal spillway riser was completed in December, 2012. In May 2013, the county received formal notification from NRCS that federal cost-share funds for the project were available. The project is currently in the process of being advertised for bid. Project construction is expected to start in the fall of 2013, and will be completed by the spring of 2014.

#### **XI. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 16 (2010):**

##### **Upgrade the New Alexandria/Belle View pump station and tide gate**

Final design for renovations to improve the New Alexandria/ Belle View tide gate has been initiated. The scope of the work includes replacement of the gate lifting mechanisms and the existing water level sensors. The project is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2013.

#### **XII. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 17 (2010):**

##### **Continue to seek voluntary buy-outs of FEMA's repetitive loss properties within the floodplain**

Fairfax County acquired residential property located at 6613 Dearborn Drive on December 22, 2011. The demolition and removal of the structure was completed in March 2012. The county completed the application and submitted to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) for grant to acquire two properties located at 6652 Barrett Road and 6615 Dearborn Drive. Both properties are located in repetitive loss areas.

#### **XIII. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 18 (2010):**

##### **Develop and implement a stormwater management ordinance**

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board adopted new stormwater regulations on May 24, 2011. With the Virginia Governor's signature, the regulations became effective on September 13, 2011. Effective July 1, 2013, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) became the lead agency for developing and implementing the statewide program in cooperation with local governments across the commonwealth. The regulations require localities to develop a stormwater program consistent with the requirements of the regulations. The regulations list specific minimum elements that must be included, the hydrologic methods and technical criteria that must be used, and the types of BMPs that are acceptable for use within the commonwealth. The regulations also reference state BMP design and construction specifications found at the Virginia Stormwater BMP Clearinghouse web site. The new stormwater regulations are based on 'volume driven compliance'. Where the current water quality provisions assign pollutant removal efficiencies for various types of BMPs, the volume-driven method derives much of its treatment benefit from volume reduction practices. Implementation of infiltration

that returns runoff to the ground, rainwater harvesting that reuses rainwater, and vegetative practices that facilitate evapotranspiration effectively prevent polluted runoff from reaching adjacent streams and water bodies. In addition to pollution prevention, the runoff reduction approach to stormwater management provides water quantity benefits by reducing the volume of runoff and mimicking natural hydrology. Runoff volumes captured for reuse, infiltration, and evaporation also help to reduce flood volumes and attenuate peak flows. With adoption of the new standards the county will continue to require that development projects manage the 2, 10 and in some cases, 100-year storm events. Fairfax County has been developing a new draft stormwater management ordinance and revisions to the engineering standards so that the county's stormwater program will meet, and in some ways, exceed the statewide requirements. Between July 2012 and July 2013 the county hosted four collaborative stakeholder sessions. Stakeholder input was used to help inform the development of the county ordinance. In addition to the ordinance and amendments to the Public Facilities Manual (PFM), staff will be designing improvements to its processes and IT resources for tracking BMPs, recording construction and post-construction BMP inspections, ensuring continued stormwater facility maintenance, tracking responses to complaints and enforcement actions. The final draft stormwater ordinance will go to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in the last quarter of 2013. After Board adoption, the new stormwater ordinance will be submitted to DEQ for review and subsequent approval by the State Water Control Board prior to the implementation date of July 1, 2014.

#### **XIV. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 19 (2010):**

##### **Improve the county's Community Rating System (CRS) classification from Class 7 to Class 6**

A preliminary assessment was completed by the SWPD to determine the best CRS class that Fairfax County could achieve under the new CRS Coordinators Manual (to be adopted in 2013), based on the current level of service being provided to county residents and the current programs in place. The analysis showed that there were some existing programs and services provided by Fairfax County that may achieve credits that could be used to improve the CRS rating. These programs and services include: Flood Protection Projects (530), Drainage System Maintenance (540), Flood Warning and Response (510), and the county's Dam Safety Program (630). A more detailed analysis will be performed in September 2013 as a part of county's revalidation of its CRS program.

#### **XV. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 20 (2010):**

##### **Collaborate with FEMA to develop risk maps for the Cameron Run Watershed and the Belle View communities**

The county anticipates forming a working group before December 2014, to collaborate with FEMA on the feasibility of developing this project.

## **XVI. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 21 (2010):**

### **Develop an outreach program aimed at assisting private dam owners**

SWPD will identify specific outreach techniques for the private dam owners. The target completion date for this activity is June 2015. Meeting this target will depend on the availability of resources.

## **XVII. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 22 (2006):**

**Install piezometers at six PL566 Pohick Creek Dams and the Holmes Run Reservoir (Res 2A) and connect these to an electronic real-time monitoring system so that the phreatic surface in the dams of these facilities can be closely monitored, particularly after major storm events.**

This action item is completed. For detailed information see the 2012 Floodplain Management Plan Progress Report.

## **XVIII. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 22 (2010):**

### **Develop a public outreach plan specific to evacuation-communication before and during an event**

The county developed a set of warnings relative to flooding in Fairfax County that are transmitted to residents prior to and during storm events. This is a comprehensive program that is managed by staff of the Office of Public Affairs (OPA). A team of county employees from Stormwater Management, the Police Department, OPA, Office of Emergency Management, and the Fire and Rescue Department worked to improve warning messages for residents, as well as additional outreach and public education activities to assist residents of the Huntington and Belle View communities in preparations before and during significant storm events.

There are numerous ways in which county residents receive flood warnings and preparedness information including:

- Emergency information blog at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog>
- Emergency information website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/>
- Flood information, flood preparedness, property protection website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/floodinformation.htm>
- Emergency phone numbers at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/phonenumbers.htm>
- News Wire at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/>
- Mobile, Apps, and Texts at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/mobile/>
- Ask Fairfax County at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/askfairfax/>
- Channel 16 at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable/channel16/vod.htm>
- Health and safety podcasts at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/podcasts/>

## **XIX. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 26 (2006):**

### **Continue to update GIS to 2-foot contours from 5-foot contours (part of the overall planimetrics features update)**

The county continues to make progress toward providing two-foot contours and updating the GIS Digital Elevation Models (DEMs). Three-quarters of the county has been updated with 2-foot contours derived from 2009 photogrammetry. Work on the last quadrant (southwest) has been completed and the full county update is available for use.

This effort will significantly improve the source data available for developing terrain models in the county. This will allow the creation of much higher resolution DEMs and Triangulated Irregular Networks (TINs).

## **XX. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 26 (2010):**

### **Use fee simple and/or permanent easement to prevent development in the highest priority undeveloped floodplain (and/or wetlands) areas. Work with land trusts to purchase the land or conservation easements. Use these areas as public open space for passive recreation uses**

Fairfax County acquired residential structure located at 6613 Dearborn Drive and restored the land to a natural condition. In addition, the county completed an application and submitted to VDEM for grant to acquire two properties located at 6652 Barrett Road and 6615 Dearborn Drive. Both properties are located in repetitive loss areas.

## **XXI. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 27 (2010):**

### **Continue development of a comprehensive River Flood Response System for New Alexandria/Belle View and Huntington in partnership with the National Weather Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

An automated electronic River Flood Response System was developed for New Alexandria/Belle View and Huntington in 2008. This system was later added to the National Weather Service Automated Flood Warning System to facilitate providing monitoring data to county residents. This system can be accessed at <http://water.weather.gov/afws/>. In addition, the county upgraded its data collection software. The upgraded system provides basin average rainfall values for Huntington.

## **XXII. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 28 (2006):**

### **Continue to implement building and development standards as required under the NFIP.**

The Land Development Services Division continues to implement the building and development standards in accordance with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code which references the International Residential Code and the International Building Code. These standards incorporate much of the NFIP's requirements.

### **XXIII. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 28 (2010):**

**Develop a template for emergency action plans (EAP) for dam breaks and other intense flooding incidents that incorporate the best EAP features of the jurisdictions in the Washington Metropolitan Area**

This action item is completed. For detailed information see the 2012 Floodplain Management Plan Progress Report.

### **XXIV. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 29 (2010):**

**Conduct annual outreach to each FEMA-listed repetitive loss and severe repetitive loss property owner, providing information on mitigation programs (grant assistance, mitigation measures, flood insurance information) that can assist them in reducing their flood risk**

Every year, the county mails a letter to each FEMA- listed repetitive loss and severe repetitive loss property owner. The letter advises the recipients about that the property is in or near a repetitive loss areas, what property protection measures are appropriate for the flood situation, and basic facts about flood insurance. This year the county developed a repetitive loss area map and sent a letter to all properties located in repetitive loss areas.

### **XXV. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 31 (2010):**

**Review locality's compliance with the NFIP with an annual review of the Floodplain Ordinances and any newly permitted activities in the 100-year floodplain. Additionally, conduct annual review of repetitive loss and severe repetitive loss property list requested of VDEM to ensure accuracy. Review will include verification of the geographic location of each repetitive loss property and determination if that property has been mitigated and by what means. Provide corrections if needed by filing for FEMA AW-501.**

On July 27, 2010, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted amendments to the Fairfax County Floodplain Ordinance and Public Facilities Manual (PFM), effective September 17, 2010, that complies with the Virginia and NFIP model floodplain ordinances. Prior to adoption by the county Board of Supervisors, the final draft of the county floodplain ordinance and all the proposed amendments to the applicable sections of PFM were reviewed and approved by the VDCR. There have been no further updates to the county's floodplain ordinance since that time. A process to conduct annual reviews of the county's floodplain requirements and repetitive loss properties located in the county is anticipated to be developed, depending on the availability of resources.

In 2012, the county has received a new list of 65 repetitive loss properties. The county reviewed and submitted an update by filing for FEMA AW-501.

## **XXVI. Fairfax County Mitigation Action 37 (2006):**

**Support mitigation of priority floodprone structures through promotion of acquisition/demolition, elevation, flood proofing, minor localized flood control projects, mitigation reconstruction, and where feasible, using FEMA HMA programs where appropriate**

A priority list of floodprone structures in Fairfax County was developed in April of 2012. This list can be used to apply for FEMA HMA grants, where appropriate, to demolish these structures and acquire the properties. The county acquired and demolished the residential structure located at 6613 Dearborn Drive and restored the land to a natural condition. The county completed the application and submitted to VDEM for a grant to acquire two properties located at 6652 Barrett Road and 6615 Dearborn Drive.

To request this information in an alternate format, call 703-324-5500, TTY 711.



Fairfax County  
Department of Public Works and Environmental Services  
Stormwater Planning Division  
12000 Government Center Parkway  
Suite 449  
Fairfax, VA 22035  
Fairfax County website: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/DPWES/stormwater/>  
703-324-5500, TTY 711  
FAX 703-802-5955